



Basic care : Guinea Pig

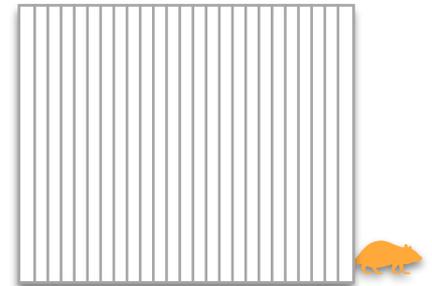
Guinea pigs have an average life span of 5-8 years. They are social animals that are mild mannered and sensitive to sound. Below are some care tips:

Cage and Living Space

A single guinea pig needs a cage that is at least 76 x 91 cm and above. A stainless steel cage is the best option (Because guinea pigs like to chew on things, many cages out there that are painted with rustproof materials or colorful paint may be dangerous for your guinea pig).

The best room temperature suitable for a guinea pig is between 18-23 degrees celsius. Guinea pigs are not able to sweat, making them prone to heatstroke. The cage should be placed away from windows or heat vents.

The humidity level in the room is also very important, as humidity will cause mold to grow on the grass and bedding inside the cage; which will cause skin problems. Keep your dehumidifier on at all times. The cage can be placed inside the living room so that your guinea pig can interact with and be around family members. Guinea pigs have sensitive hearing; do not place their cage beside the TV or speakers.



Bedding

1. Pee Pads

We suggest to use pee pads made out of cloth because they absorb liquids very well and is more environmentally friendly. Wash and change the pee pad daily.

2. Wood shavings (not softwood like pine), pellets, dry grass/hay, shredded paper, fleece

It is very humid in Taiwan, so make sure their bedding is cleaned and changed when there are excrements; as well as to prevent the growth of mold.

Food/Water Containers (Food bowl, Water bowl, Drip Feed Bottle)

Ceramic, stainless steel, and glass made food and water bowls can be used. If you choose to use a drip feed water bottle, make sure to place it at an adequate height so that your guinea pig can easily access the bottle (as a guinea pig drinks from the drip feed bottle, they may blow out air or food, which may block water from coming out, make sure you clean the bottle everyday and make sure there are no blockages).

Food and Water

1. Pellets

Provide about 15 g of pellets a day (separated into 2 meals). You can choose pellets made out of timothy hay and feed that is rich in vitamin C. There are different types of commercial pellets for guinea pigs at different ages.

(Pellets with added vitamin C should be kept in the fridge after opening).

2. Grass/Hay

Provide grass/hay inside their cage at all times. It helps guinea pigs with digestion and is great for their chewing habits and helps to grind down their teeth. There are many types of grass/hay you can provide, timothy hay, wheat grass, orchard grass, Bermuda grass, etc. Providing a variety of grass/hay for your guinea pig is essential so that they get a balanced diet.

3. Vegetables

Guinea pigs cannot naturally produce vitamin C within their bodies, therefore it is crucial to provide fresh vegetables daily (with the exception of baby guinea pigs, where vegetables could upset their stomachs). Amount each day should be about a cup (8oz).

Vegetables you can provide: green peppers, bell peppers, cucumbers, bok choy, mustard spinach, white radish leaves, parsley, romaine lettuce, carrots, celery...etc

4. Water

Please provide fresh filtered drinking water daily.

Treats and Supplements

1. Fruits and Vegetables

Apples, oranges, strawberries, pumpkin slices, sweet potatoes (all fruits should be pitted, and be provided only once a day in small portions. Ex: one apple slice a day; one orange slice a day; 3-5 blueberries a day)

2. Vitamin C tablets

Can be bought at pet stores, provide 15 mg a day. Feed the entire tablet whole to make sure your guinea pig gets the right amount of vitamin C.

Housing

Guinea pigs should be provided places to hide within their cage so that they can rest peacefully and sleep. You can use wooden boxes or housing made out of cloth.

Toys

Chew toys made out of natural materials are the most suitable and can help guinea pigs distress. Logs, blocks and balls made out of straw or wood are all suitable.

A selection of tunnels, tubes, and bridges should also be provided, as they are the perfect hideaway, and are also great fun for guinea pigs to run through and play around in.

Nail Clipper

Guinea pigs need their nails trimmed every 6-8 weeks. You can do it yourself or consult a vet.

Brush

Guinea pigs have delicate skin, use a soft flat brush to comb their fur. Once a day.

Health

Bring your guinea pig for a checkup every 6 months to a year. If you notice signs of illness or injury please consult your vet right away (ex: loss in appetite, shedding, weight loss, dull looking fur, fluid coming out of the eyes or nose, trouble relieving themselves).

Guinea pigs are extremely social animals, it is not suggested to keep only one guinea pig by themselves. To prevent overpopulation, please have your guinea pig neutered by a vet. Keep males and females separate as they may physically fight. When introducing a new guinea pig, keep them in separate areas of the cage with a divider in between, once they are used to each other, then take out the divider.

Common Illnesses and Problems:

1. Vitamin C deficiency (please provide vitamin c rich fruits and vegetables and vitamin c tablets daily)
2. Misaligned teeth/bite, overgrown teeth (provide large amounts of chewing grass/hay daily)
3. Skin infections: fungal, scabies
4. Tumors
5. Difficult labor
6. Licking and swallowing fur: Due to stress, a guinea pig may lick himself or another guinea pig's fur. (Provide high fiber foods and check to see if their living environment is suitable)

Companionship and Interaction

Guinea pigs love companionship, you should pet, play, and talk with your guinea pig everyday. Let your guinea pig out of their cage at least once a day to exercise and interact with family members.

Consultant

Taiwan Rabbit Saving Association Wu Ying Jin

Sources

新手高明飼養法 – 天竺鼠 (鈴木莉萌著, 漢欣文化事業出版)

Honk Kong SPCA – Responsible Pet Ownership

The Humane Society

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/guinea_pigs/

Guinea Lynx

<http://www.guinealynx.info/index.html>

Montgomery County Humane Society

<https://www.mchumane.org>

Information described above is for reference only. For professional advice please consult a professional veterinarian.